[For material on the nomadic kin-village among the Altaic-speaking peoples of the Asiatic steppe, see 10: Krader, AH1 Mongolia, category 116, pp. 568-574.]

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principle; but this is a purely genetic consideration. In actual function, the estates are politically, militarily, and economically distinct divisions. Thus the entire society of the Asiatic steppe is anomalous, for its major units are quasi-political and quasi-consanguineal structures. Because of their consanguineal character, the clan and other major units therefore will be briefly sketched in their specific forms for each of the societies, Buryat, Kalmuk, and so forth. As consanguineal structures, their analysis will afford insight into the kinship relations within smaller units. Nevertheless they cannot be a primary consideration in the analysis of kinship systems because they go beyond this mode of human relationship into the domain of political structure, etc.

Village and Family

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The nomadic village on the Asiatic steppe is formed of a cluster of related families who pasture their herds together, camp together, nomadize together, combine for mutual protection and for religious rites. The village is a unit of local government having at its head an elder who, in company with other respected men of the community, guides its affairs and regulates its conduct, movements and relations with other units, larger, smaller, and co-equal. The elder, who is the head of the senior family of the village, together with his compeers, the heads of

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other leading families in the village, adjudicates disputes, maintains the social norms and mores by punishing evildoers, represents the village-kin-community before the reigning prince, oversees payment of tribute and taxes, and the supply of manpower for corvée and military service, attends to the mercantile endebtedness of the community; by the weight of their presence and inherent authority, as well as by specific acts and judgments, they unite the community and regulate its life.

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The village is that which the family becomes if it is large enough and wealthy enough. Where these two conditions are satisfied, one might find a great tent belonging to the head of the household, flanked by the tents of the wives, and separate tents for all sons who are of age, whether married or only betrothed; the tents of married sons might in turn be flanked by tents of their offspring; and on the outer perimeter of the encampment lie the tents of poorer and more distant agnatic kinsmen, servants' tents, storage tents, baking and cooking tents, etc. Such an ideal is not often realized; a village is usually comprised of a number of related extended families, each with a modest household of a few tents arranged around the tent of the patriarch, and several such clusters combining to form the larger village pattern. In the eastern steppe, i.e., among the Buryats and Khalkhas, the village is circular in form, as are the component household

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clusters; in the western steppe, i.e., among the Kalmuks and Kazakh-Kirgis, the village is deployed in the form of a broad arc open to the south, or in a straight line.

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The family is patriarchal: authority rests in the father, the senior male in the eldest generation of the household; marriage is patrilocal, wives come into the family of the husband. Polygyny occurs, in fact it is desired, but it is rare, to be undertaken only by those who can afford it, or who undertake it in the hope of assuring male issue and the continuation of the line. The steppe family is an extended family; that is, the family into which a son is born, and the family which he raises are one and the same, and there is usually an unbroken continuum of at least three generations: one generation past fertility, one child-bearing generation, and its offspring. Sometimes, if personality and wealth factors permit, this community may even include cousins who are sons of brothers, together with their children, making four generations and/or their progeny united in one family enclosure; but this, too, is rare. Nevertheless it is a valued situation, a desideratum, just as polygyny is.

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The wife in such a family structure has a double relationship, for her family of procreation is not that into which she was born, and she retains special ties to her natal family throughout her life. These ties are revealed by the special term which she uses in referring to